

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 IO-14 COA-02 EB-11 COME-00

SAJ-01 DLOS-06 CG-00 DRC-01 /113 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC PRIORITY

COMUSK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1127

JOINT EMBASSY/UNC MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MAR, KS, KN

SUBJECT: ROK-NK FISHING BOAT INCIDENT

1. FEBRUARY 15 NORTH KOREAN SINKING OF ONE ROK FISHING BOAT AND SEIZURE OF SECOND HAS BEEN REPORTED THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS.

2. UNDERSTANDABLY ROKG HAS REACTED STRONGLY TO INCIDENT PUBLICLY AS WELL AS THROUGH HOT LINE TO NORTH. AT 1615 HOURS TODAY SOUTH KOREANS USED HOT LINE TO CONVEY STRONG PROTEST TO NORTH AND TO DEMAND IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SEIZED FISHING CRAFT AND ITS CREW. WE DO NOT HAVE TRANSCRIPT SOUTH KOREAN PROTEST BUT UNDERSTAND THUT SOUTH STATED INCIDENT IS FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF SOUTH-NORTH JULY 4 COMMUNIQUE, CHARGED NORTH WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSEQUENCES AND DEMANDED RELEASE OF SEIZED VESSEL AND CREW. SO FAR NORTH HAS NOT RESPONDED TO ROKG DEMAND FOR REPLY.

3. LATE THIS AFTERNOON, MOFA ASSISTANT VICE MINISTER KIM CHUNG-TAE TELEPHONED DCM TO INFORM HIM THAT MND WAS REQUESTING THROUGH UNC CHANNEL THAT MAC MEETING BE CALLED TO PROTEST INCIDENT. KIM
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SAID PURPOSE FOR CALL WAS TO INFORM US THAT IT IS ROKG VIEW THAT

MAC MEETING SHOULD BE CALLED.

4. IN RESPONSE TO KIM, DCM POINTED OUT THAT WE DO NOT YET HAVE ALL FACTS SURROUNDING INCIDENT AND THAT SUFFICIENT TIME HAS NOT ELAPSED TO ALLOW FOR NORTH KOREAN REPLY TO ROKG PROTEST THROUGH SNCC HOT LINE CHANNEL. SAID WE WOULD WANT TO DELAY CONSIDERATION OF MAC MEETING UNTIL WE HAD ALL OF THE AVAILABLE FACTS IN HAND AND NORTH KOREANS HAD TIME TO REPLY VIA HOT LINE. SAID WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO LOOK AT MATTER AGAIN MORNING OF FEBRUARY 16. KIM DID NOT OBJECT.

5. IN TECHNICAL SENSE, FISHING BOAT INCIDENT WHICH TOOK PLACE NORTH OF NORTHERN LIMIT LINE AND IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS DOES NOT INVOLVE SPECIFIC ARMISTICE AGREEMENT VIOLATION. HOWEVER IN CONTEXT OF AA PARA 17, SUCH AN INCIDENT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS CONTRARY TO TERMS OF PARA 12 I.E. INCIDENT IS OBVIOUSLY A HOSTILE ACT. IN 1971 SIMILAR INCIDENT WAS RAISED BY UNC AT MAC MEETING ON THOSE GROUNDS. FURTHER, WE BELIEVE UNC WILL BE UNDER HEAVY ROK PRESSURE TOMORROW TO TAKE MATTER UP IN MAC FORUM, PARTICULARLY IF REMAINING FISHING BOAT AND CREW NOT RELEASED.

6. FOR OUR PART, WE DO NOT WISH TO MAKE DECISION NOW ON MAC MEETING AS WE SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE ALL OF FACTS. FURTHER, DIRECT SOUTH-NORTH CHANNEL IS MORE EFFECTIVE MECHANISM TO SECURE RELEASE OF BOAT AND FISHERMEN, IF RPT IF NORTH KOREANS DISPOSED TO DO SO. HOWEVER, IN ABSENCE RELEASE OF BOAT AND CREW OR A FAVORABLE NORTH KOREAN RESPONSE TO ROK PROTEST, WE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY RAISING MATTER IN MAC AS ROKG REQUESTS.

7. ANY WASHINGTON VIEWS SHOULD ARRIVE BY OPENING OF BUSINESS HERE FEBRUARY 16.
HABIB

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Message Attributes

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